



# CONGRESSIONAL HEARING RESUME

106th Congress

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**Date: 21 October 1999**

**SUBJECT:           Hearing on Kosovo Lessons Learned**

**COMMITTEE:       Senate Armed Services Committee**

**CHAIRMAN:        The Honorable John Warner**

**MEMBERS PRESENT (bold face):**

**REPUBLICANS**

**Strom Thurmond (SC)**

John McCain (AZ)

Bob Smith (NH)

**James Inhofe (OK)**

Rick Santorum (PA)

**Olympia Snowe (ME)**

**Pat Roberts (KS)**

**Wayne Allard (CO)**

Tim Hutchinson (AR)

**Jeff Sessions (AL)**

**DEMOCRATS**

**Carl Levin (MI)**

Edward Kennedy (MA)

Jeff Bingaman (NM)

Robert Byrd (WV)

**Charles Robb (VA)**

**Joseph Lieberman (CT)**

**Max Cleland (GA)**

Mary Landrieu (LA)

**Jack Reed (RI)**

**WITNESSES:**    **General Wesley Clark**, USA, Commander-in-Chief, United States European Command and Supreme Allied Commander, Europe  
                  **Admiral James Ellis**, USN, Commander-in-Chief, United States Naval Forces, Europe and Commander-in-Chief, Allied Forces, Southern Europe  
                  **Lieutenant General Michael Short**, USAF, Commander, 16<sup>th</sup> Air Force, United States Air Forces, Europe and Commander, Allied Air Forces, Southern Europe

Information contained in this resume was obtained during an open hearing. It will not be released outside of the Department of Defense (DoD) agencies until published hearing transcripts have been released by the Committee, and only to the extent it is in accord with published hearing procedures.

**Prepared by: Maj Tom Henwood      Date: 21 October 1999      Ext: 697-6790**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**The Committee convened this hearing to hear the unique perspectives of the field commanders on what lessons we should draw from Operation Allied Force. All three witnesses testified that although they had different views of how to conduct the air campaign, those differences did not detract from their resolve to accomplish the mission. Lt Gen Short expressed his opinion that we should have “gone after the head of the snake” on the first night. He felt targeting restrictions and preoccupation with collateral damage put aircrews at increased risk. This led to a discussion on balancing the need for alliance cohesiveness with operational effectiveness. General Clark made two key points: (1) When we cross the threshold and commit to act militarily, we must do so with rapid, decisive force; and (2) We must use all the instruments of national power (i.e., economic, diplomatic, etc.), not just the military instrument. Another point made by both the Committee members and witnesses was the expectation of zero-casualty combat operations is unrealistic.**

The hearing opened at 0935.

## **OPENING REMARKS**

### **Sen Warner**

Hearing today is the sixth in a series of hearings the Committee has conducted this year on the situation in Kosovo and the second since the Oct 12 release of the Pentagon’s Quick Look” Kosovo after action review. Insights of witnesses are critical to the Committee’s understanding of the military operation in Kosovo. We must learn the right lessons from Kosovo. One of the mistaken impressions left by Kosovo is that future wars can be casualty-free, conducted with the use of air assets and sea-launched assets only. Conflicts should be fought with military commanders making decisions on military matters, with the availability of all assets at the disposal of the military planners and field commanders. This did not happen in Kosovo and the witnesses today have expressed their frustration with the consequences of not following these military principles in Kosovo. NATO decisions to not even allow the planning of a ground option and to go with an incremental, gradually escalated bombing campaign are of particular concern to the Committee. Did we pay too high a price to achieve consensus among the 19 NATO allies?

### **Sen Levin**

OAF was an extraordinary success because an alliance of 19 nations was steadfast and for the first time ethnic cleansing was turned back. Need to analyze how we can improve future alliance operations. Need to ask ourselves if the alliance would have held together if we had planned for a ground campaign from the beginning. Did Milosevic believe we were planning for a ground war? How can we improve information operations?

## **WITNESS STATEMENTS**

### **Gen Clark**

The military commanders may have had different views about how to conduct the air campaign, but we were united in our determination to prevail. Operation Allied Force

(OAF) was an incredibly precise operation. The coalition fired or dropped 23,000 weapons with only 20 incidents of collateral damage (less than 1/10<sup>th</sup> of 1% incident rate). The alliance worked.

### **Adm Ellis**

It is important to recognize the contribution of the alliance. There was never a lack of resolve at the operational or tactical level. We must be prepared for the complexity of combined operations in the future.

### **Lt Gen Short**

Through 38,000 sorties, the professionalism of the aircrews was magnificent. OAF was an airpower success. It was also a testament to technology. Every weapon system we've acquired performed as we expected: B-2/JDAM, Predator, Laser guided munitions, lantirn pods, CALCM, P-3/EC-130. We were well-served by the RDT&E efforts of DoD. Although there were differences in philosophy of how to conduct the air campaign, those differences never affected our resolve to get the job done.

## **KEY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS, AND ANSWERS**

- **Sen Warner** asked Lt Gen Short what he would have done differently in the air campaign. **Gen Short** told the committee his son flew 40 missions in the A-10 during the air campaign and took a hit from a SA-3. He then said "he would have gone for the head of the snake on the first night of the air campaign...would have dropped the bridges on the Danube, turned out all the lights, and hit all the politically important buildings in Belgrade. Milosevic would have awoke the next morning and asked what the hell happened." To explain Milosevic's mindset, Gen Short told the committee about a meeting he had with Ambassador Holbrooke and Milosevic prior to the air campaign. During this meeting, Holbrooke and Short tried to convince Milosevic to pull his SA-3s and 6s out of Kosovo. Finally, after going without sleep for 32 hours while unsuccessfully negotiating with Milosevic, Gen Short told him, "Sir, You're pounding sand up my ass." After one of Milosevic's aides explained what that meant, Milosevic agreed to remove the SAMs. Gen Short stated his belief that if we had hit Milosevic hard on the first night, he would have had to ask himself, "If this is what the first night is like, I wonder what the rest of the war will be like."
- **Gen Short** also made the point that the preoccupation with collateral damage handcuffed the military commanders. The restrictions were extraordinary and put our crews at an increased risk. As a specific example, he told the committee that after an Allied bomb struck a bridge and unintentionally killed some bystanders, they were only permitted to strike bridges between 2200 and 0400. This made missions predictable and increased the risk to aircrews.
- **Gen Short** stated his belief that the US could have leveraged its position as the "big dog" in the Alliance to a greater degree. He mentioned that the French, who provided less than 8% of the sorties, prevented the US, which provided 70% of the sorties, from striking a valuable target set in Montenegro.
- **Sen Levin** agreed that the limitation of target sets was undesirable but then made the point that it was the price to pay for operating in a democratic alliance. He asked Gen Clark to respond to Gen Short's remarks. **Gen Clark** agreed with most of what Gen Short said and added that once the threshold is crossed and we make the decision to act, the use of force

must be decisive and rapid. He then explained the four measures of merit for the air campaign:

- Avoid the loss of aircraft
- Maximize the military and political impacts against Serb centers of gravity
- Avoid collateral damage
- Maintain alliance cohesion

When planning a military campaign, we must have the full support of all elements of national power (diplomatic, economic, etc.)

- **Sen Inhofe** paraphrased a quote by Gen Jumper in which he said that the air campaign would have been much different if Serb forces were more advanced (had SU-35s and SA-10s). Sen Inhofe then asked Gen Short about the need for the F-22. Gen Short responded that Gen Jumper was right on target--the F-22 is an extraordinary capability this nation needs.
- **Sen Inhofe** asked Gen Clark to provide his opinion about the need for Global Hawk to the committee for the record.
- In response to a question about Alliance interoperability from **Sen Lieberman**, **Gen Short** said there are three teams within NATO. US forces were on the first team and had the capability to go "downtown." Other NATO nations have not made the commitment to national defense necessary to play on the first team. **Gen Clark** said he has talked to the Defense Ministers about this and they clearly understand its importance. The Defense Capability Initiative (DCI) will help address this issue.
- **Sen Sessions** asked if we might have stopped the ethnic cleansing sooner if we had gone after Milosevic's CoGs in Belgrade at the beginning of the campaign. **Gen Clark** answered that many factors contributed to the success of OAF and Milosevic agreeing to the demands of NATO:
  - Success of air campaign on a strategic and tactical level
  - Demonstration of NATO's resolve
  - Milosevic's realization that he did not have the support of the Russians

**Gen Short** said he felt we might have stopped the ethnic cleansing sooner if we had stabbed a dagger in the heart of the Serb leadership early in the air campaign. **Sen Sessions** remarked that the nature of warfare has changed and our Allies need to understand that.

- **Sen Reed** asked what lessons we should not take from Kosovo. **Gen Clark** responded with what he thinks are the greatest lessons. They are: (1) When military force is used as an instrument of national power, casualties will be inevitable (OAF is an anomaly). (2) We must apply decisive force as rapidly as possible. **Adm Ellis** said the lesson we should not learn is a uni-dimensional approach (i.e., airpower only) to conflict will always work and that there will be no surprises during conflict. He was surprised we did not face an asymmetric threat from the Serbs. **Gen Short** stated his greatest concern is our Allies will believe airpower is a freebie that will guarantee no loss of life.

**The open portion of the hearing was adjourned at 1200. Committee members and witnesses moved to SR-222 for the closed session.**